

**Public Health Committee  
Public Hearing  
March 5, 2007**

**Testimony of Walton Rose, M. Div, D. Min  
Bereavement Manager, VITAS Innovative Hospice Care of Hartford**

My name is Walton Rose. I have been working in hospice and palliative care for over three years. I am here this morning to testify in support of Raised Bill No. 7193 which recognizes a state regulatory scheme for hospice-only providers in the State of Connecticut.

Spiritual pain is as significant as physical and emotional suffering for those facing death. Assessment of this begins on admission and continues throughout the time a patient is cared for. Visits by chaplains and social workers are integral to assuring that pain and other symptoms are managed so that patients can get on with living as they approach the end of life. A presence during this time helps to develop the trust that can build for a strong foundation when looking at the bereavement needs of family later. Family, for the patients we serve, is whomever is identified as important within that circle of care as family to the individual patient. Planning for needs of family starts on admission.

Anticipatory grief issues and unique individual needs are discussed at case conferences and the full time social workers and chaplains, as part of the team caring for the patient and family, work together to help with bringing families together in this time of special need. We are part of the planning for funerals and memorial services, supporting through individualized one-on-one grief support or ongoing support groups, and scheduled yearly memorial services. Chaplains and bereavement manager are involved in supporting the family for at least 13 months after the death. Thank you for listening to these important matters. Do you have any questions for me?